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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6929
INFO RUEHRB/AMEMBASSY RABAT PRIORITY 2666
RUEHTRO/AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI PRIORITY
RUEHTU/AMEMBASSY TUNIS PRIORITY 7524
RUEHMD/AMEMBASSY MADRID PRIORITY 9169
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY 3020
RUEHCL/AMCONSUL CASABLANCA PRIORITY 3632
RUEHMRE/AMCONSUL MARSEILLE PRIORITY 1703
RHMFISS/HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ALGIERS 000096

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [ETRD](#) [EWWT](#) [AG](#)

SUBJECT: U.S. COAST GUARD GIVES ALGERIAN PORTS HIGH MARKS

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Classified By: A/DCM Mark Schapiro for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (U) SUMMARY: A delegation of four International Port Security Specialists from the U.S. Coast Guard visited the ports of Arzew and Algiers from January 10-14, marking the second visit by the Coast Guard since the implementation of the International Ship and Port Facility Security Code (ISPS) in 2002. The team found the security at the ports to have substantially improved since 2004 and to be compliant with the ISPS Code, in some cases even surpassing the security found at many U.S. ports. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (U) Since the implementation of the Maritime Transportation Act of 2002, the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) has been charged with surveying the security measures maintained at ports from which non-U.S. flagged vessels depart for American ports, and which U.S. flagged vessels visit. The USCG conducted an initial assessment of the ports of Oran, Algiers, and Arzew in 2004 and found them to be in compliance with ISPS codes, but made some suggestions for improving port perimeter security and crisis management mechanisms.

ARZEW: GOOD SECURITY FOR OIL AND GAS TERMINALS

¶3. (C) During their January 10-14 follow-on visit, a team of four USCG port security specialists visited the ports of Arzew and Algiers. At Arzew, they found that port security had substantially improved since 2004. As one of Algeria's primary natural gas and oil terminals, the port is administered by a joint-venture company created by Sonatrach and the local port authority. The LNG and LPG piers were protected with surveillance equipment and fencing that the USCG team describes as "on par with or better than many port facilities in the United States." The official at Arzew port in charge of implementing ISPS guidelines stated that the port had made particular strides since 2004 in preventing stowaways from boarding tankers through the port. In 2005, there were 104 incidents in which potential illegal emigrants broke through port security to the dock area, of which 15 successfully stowed away on ships. Since the installation of the new surveillance systems and guard dogs, only 17 people made it through the security perimeter in 2008 and there were no successful stowaways.

PORT OF ALGIERS: CITY WITHIN A CITY

¶4. (C) The USCG specialists found that improvements made to the Port of Algiers since 2004 were similarly impressive. Since the last USCG visit, authorities designated the port

area an exclusive zone in which no other commercial activities are allowed. This led to the eviction of countless small businesses whose activities were unrelated to the port, but which had based their offices in port warehouses and administrative buildings. The city of Algiers also cleared informal merchant spaces from a strip on either side of the main roadway that passes along the port's perimeter, creating an open buffer zone to allow for better perimeter surveillance and access control. Equally important was the sophisticated badging system, now used at all international ports in Algeria, that gives workers access only to the area of the port related to their function. During a debriefing session, a member of the USCG complimented the Algerians for their efforts at controlling access both of individuals arriving to the port and of commercial and fishing vessels using the docks. He noted the complex nature of the port, which provides docking space for fishing boats, commercial transport vessels including bulk cargo, container traffic and roll-on roll-off vessels, large passenger and vehicle ferry vessels, and bulk fuel offloading vessels. The USCG representative likened the port zone to a "city within a city," and complimented the head of port security for his efforts to secure it.

FUTURE ENGAGEMENT

15. (C) The Ministries of Energy and Transportation were exceedingly open and forthcoming during the visit of the Coast Guard team. All of our interlocutors were eager to hear the team's assessments as specialists and port officials appeared genuinely committed to increasing the security of the ports. The national authorities presented a comprehensive port security plan that effectively integrates

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relevant authorities and agencies in an efficient manner not frequently seen in Algeria. There was genuine interest to learn more about how the USCG cooperates with federal, state, and local authorities on issues of port security. GOA officials were extremely interested in a study tour of U.S. ports, but the inability of the USCG to fund such a trip means other funding must be secured.

16. (C) Due to security concerns, the team was not able to visit the port at Skikda, Algeria's other major LPG and LNG terminal. Flight delays also caused a planned trip to the port of Bejaia to be canceled. A small team from the USCG Liaison office in Rotterdam hopes to return later this year to assess these two ports.

PEARCE